

6-1969

## West Virginia Libraries 1969 Vol.22 No.2

Mrs. Thomas Van Auken

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# WEST VIRGINIA LIBRARIES

1969

Vol. 22



JUNE

No. 2

## in this issue:

A PLEA FOR FISCAL PARITY by JAMES NELSON

HISTORY OF RALEIGH COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY  
by MARY LOUISE GRAHAM

WEST VIRGINIA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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(cont. on inside of back cover)



# WEST VIRGINIA LIBRARIES

Vol. 22  
No. 2

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE  
WEST VIRGINIA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

June  
1969

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## CALENDAR

1969  
June 7 (tent.) WVLA Executive Board Meeting  
June 22 - 28 ALA Atlantic City  
July 13 - 15 Church and Synagogue Library Association  
2d Annual Conf., Shoreham Hotel, Wash., D.C.  
Sept. 25 - 27 1969 WVLA Conference. Hotel Morgan, Morgan-  
town, W. Va.  
Nov. 1 - 2 West Virginia Student Library Assistants'  
Conference. Cedar Lakes, W. Va.

1970  
Oct. 31 -  
Nov. 1 WVEA Student Library Assistants' Conference  
Nov. 5 - 7 WVLA Annual Conference, The Greenbrier,  
White Sulphur Springs

+ + +

Membership renewals are in the mail for all members of WVLA who are delinquent in paying their 1969 dues as well as for prospective new members of the association. Since the data on this form are necessary for the Directory Issue of WEST VIRGINIA LIBRARIES, which will be published in August, please return your application form no later than July 1 to insure inclusion in the directory.

+ + +

Unsolicited articles or suggestions for topics of articles for WEST VIRGINIA LIBRARIES, news items of general interest, personnel notes, or calendar dates are welcomed by the editor. Deadline for material is one month prior to the month of publication, i.e., August 1 for September issue, November 1 for December issue, etc.

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WEST VIRGINIA LIBRARIES is the official quarterly organ of the West Virginia Library Association. Viewpoints expressed are not necessarily the official viewpoints of WVLA. Subscription is included with WVLA membership dues; the rate for nonmembers is \$2.50 per year or 75¢ per issue. Change of address notices, subscription requests, and payments should be sent to: Mr. Clifford Hamrick, WVLA Treasurer, West Virginia University Library, Morgantown, West Virginia 26506.

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The following issues of WEST VIRGINIA LIBRARIES were not published: 1966: v. 19 no. 4 (Dec.)  
1967: v. 20 no. 2 (June) & no. 4 (Dec.)

## FORMATION OF MARLF REQUIRES WVLA CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

The Middle Atlantic Regional Federation, Inc. (MARLF) has been formally organized as the successor to the former Middle Atlantic Regional Library Conference, with WVLA's membership in the association dependent upon the approval of WVLA constitutional changes outlined below.

After five Mid-Atlantic conferences, persons involved felt a more efficient organization would be necessary for future successful conferences. As a result, initial steps to incorporate the organization were taken at the 1967 MARLC Conference by Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. On February 24, 1969, representatives of these states met in Philadelphia and adopted the by-laws under which future regional library conferences will be conducted.

MARLF is to be governed by a board of directors which meets twice each year and elects officers annually from among its members. Membership of the board consists of two representatives from each state library association. The four-year terms of the board members are staggered. Officers and directors for 1969 are: John Zimmerman, Maryland, president; William Rochenbeck, New Jersey, vice-president; Marie Davis, Pennsylvania, secretary-treasurer; William Myers (4 yrs.) and Nicholas Winowich (2 yrs.), West Virginia; Christopher Devan (4 yrs.) and Dr. Richmond Williams (2 yrs.), Delaware; Grace Slocum (2 yrs.), Maryland; Marion R. Evans (2 yrs.), New Jersey; A. Nicholas Kobe (4 yrs.) and Charles F. Gosnell (2 yrs.), New York.

Since MARLF is a federation of associations, individuals will not pay dues. Instead, each member association will be assessed a sum based on its total membership, with the per capita rate to be the same for each member association.

The Constitution and Bylaws Committee of WVLA recommends the following changes in the Constitution and Bylaws at the 1969 WVLA Conference. All changes are given in capital letters.

It is recommended that Article VIII of the Constitution be amended to read as follows:

### Article VIII AFFILIATION

Section 1. This association shall be a chapter of the American Library Association and representatives shall be elected in accordance with the ALA constitution and bylaws.

Section 2. THIS ASSOCIATION SHALL BE A MEMBER OF THE MIDDLE ATLANTIC REGIONAL LIBRARY FEDERATION AND REPRESENTATIVES SHALL BE APPOINTED UNDER SUCH CONDITIONS AS MAY BE PROVIDED IN THE BYLAWS OR AUTHORIZED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD.

(cont. on p. 5)



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## THE IMAGE BUILDER

The time: June, 1965. A librarian, freshly graduated, is casting about for a job. Anywhere, U.S.A., is under consideration, though personal interests make West Virginia desirable. Having been well-schooled in fact-finding, the newly anointed professional heads for the library. American Library Directory gives names and statistics. ... Too cryptic. ... A myriad of small libraries. Nothing very impressive. But size alone is not damning. What is the intellectual climate of libraries? What are librarians doing and thinking about? Any problems? Any major undertaking? Is there a state library association? What does it do?

Aha!! Here's a publication of the West Virginia Library Association. But only one issue in this library -- and this a major public library on the eastern seaboard. Nothing written by any of the state's librarians. Nothing about the state's libraries either. Sorry, no help here. ... Another library -- this time at a major university in the southwest. One copy of WEST VIRGINIA LIBRARIES -- 2 years old! Not much useful information here.

The time: June, 1969. A librarian, freshly graduated, is casting about for a job. Anywhere, U.S.A., is under consideration. Elsewhere, a librarian's husband has been offered a job in West Virginia. Librarian wants to know if her skills will be marketable. So... to the stacks. This year's librarian will probably find a recent issue of WEST VIRGINIA LIBRARIES. Libraries, librarians, and their image are up for judgement. ... Only one vacancy in the state listed in "Job Market"? But last fall's issue had pages of new appointments. ... Hmm, not so backward a state as journalists' propaganda suggests. At least they are talking about automation and buildings at their conferences. And one library is switching from DC to LC. ...

West Virginia librarians project their image throughout the nation via WEST VIRGINIA LIBRARIES. We note that we can be found in almost all of the major public libraries in the U.S., and in most of the accredited library schools. In addition to the 360 individual subscribers, 156 libraries (101 out of state and 9 out of the country) and 21 business firms subscribe to WEST VIRGINIA LIBRARIES.

WEST VIRGINIA LIBRARIES has as its main objective to serve as a regular means of communication among librarians in the State. In so doing, however, a by-product is formed. For the transmittal of our state's developments in libraries creates an image which can be observed and will be observed by intelligent librarians throughout the nation. Perhaps in this case the by-product is more important than the product.

We hope that the image we reflect is accurate.

WVLA

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WVLA CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES (cont. from p. 3)

It is recommended that the following item "G" be added to Section I of Article III of the WVLA Bylaws as a new item:

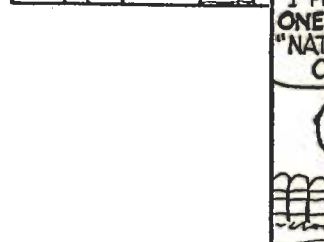
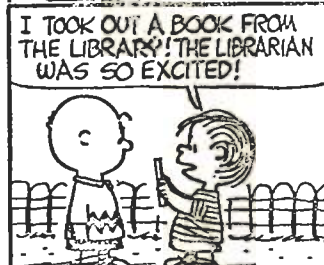
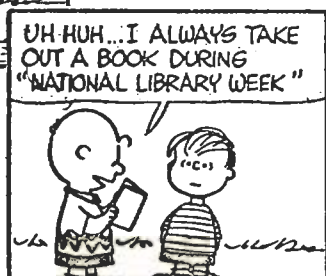
Article III Duties of Officers

Section I. President. The duties of the president shall be as follows:

A - F [Will remain as given in the Bylaws]

G. TO APPOINT, WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD, MEMBERS TO SERVE ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE MIDDLE ATLANTIC REGIONAL FEDERATION.

Submitted by WVLA Constitution and Bylaws Committee: John E. Scott, Chairman; Margaret Bobbitt, Eloise Newlon, Robert Willits





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## A PLEA FOR FISCAL PARITY

by James B. Nelson

Director

Cabell County Public Library

A recent television show starring West Virginia's own Don Knotts ran a takeoff on "The Dating Game." The prize for the winners was to have been a weekend for two in beautiful Wheeling, West Virginia, all expenses paid and, as a final touch, dinner for two at either of Wheeling's restaurants.

Now Don Knotts is a native of Wheeling and knows full well that Wheeling has at least three good restaurants. Any native can tell you there is much to see and enjoy in this mountain state. The visitor can even enjoy the amenities and high cuisine of the Greenbrier, a spot which librarians visit on conventions. A sense of excellence abounds in many parts of our state. For many things, the best that West Virginia offers is only equalled elsewhere; for a very few things, our best is unsurpassed. Then, unfortunately, there are our public libraries. If you are truly critical and honest, you realize that in traveling from Newell to Bluefield, from Harper's Ferry to Kenova, or in any direction, the one thing you will not find in West Virginia is a good public library.

True, some of our public libraries are better than others in the state, or in bordering states. Many offer good service; most are staffed by dedicated, conscientious, and tireless people. Many communities, boards and librarians have worked untold hours and countless thankless years to achieve a modicum of success, perhaps even a new building, that local gentry point to with pride - along with the brand new sewage disposal plant.

The successes that have been achieved should not be downgraded. Local legislation has given libraries in the larger urban centers a guaranteed income that is often hundreds of times the support given the poorest endowed libraries. The West Virginia Library Commission has given most residents of the state some form of free library service. Once there was none. Counties and regions receive direct federal aid for services and construction. Public libraries in the state are definitely better than they were even five years ago.

All this is good, but far from enough. Five years ago, for example, public library standards maintained a minimum per capita expenditure for good library service at \$3.50 per capita, a figure that remains on the books. At least three of four public libraries

in the state are now near that figure; one or two surpass it; at least one approaches \$4.00 per capita. Fine and good. But Herbert Goldhor points out that good quality public library service now costs at least \$5.00 per capita. Many surpass \$6.00 per capita; some surpass \$7.00 per capita; a few go even higher. Furthermore, those fundings are not diluted and strained by large amounts laid aside for capital improvements.

Our best-funded libraries are financed through local laws, which set upward limits. Those financial ceilings hurt. To use the old maxim of the Pennsylvania Dutch: "The hurrier we move, the behinder we get." And we are behind, far behind, and getting much behinder. Unless some radical moves are made soon for fiscal parity, public libraries in West Virginia are doomed to become as common a part of our state's landscape as the giant tulip poplar or the abandoned coal tippie. To face facts honestly now is to realize our public libraries are fighting for their lives.

But before trying to find out how fiscal parity can be achieved, we must first show why. The why is obvious and apparent and unfortunately overlooked.

1. Realistic and competitive public library salary schedules.

Recent graduates from accredited library schools now enter their first public library positions at up to and better than \$8,000.00 per year. Our library systems attempt to compete for that graduate at \$6,000.00 - \$7,200.00. The whole point of fact is that West Virginia must compete at better than the going national rate to attract qualified, competent professionals. And it is apparently the case that all things, including salaries, being equal, a marketable librarian asked to choose between West Virginia and Seepage Ditch, Oregon, usually picks the latter.

Since recruitment from outside is difficult, recruitment from within becomes doubly essential. And the best choices should be the recent college graduate, not necessarily the old library hand with years of service. Moreover, we must presume to pay the recruited and trained native at the same national going rate and better. "Readin', writin', and Route 21" applies as much to public libraries as it does to the rest of our state.

In addition, other salaries must be established too at going rates for similar positions. That rate must realistically reflect the federal minimum wage and hourly laws. The minimum starting salary for the lowest paid library employee must be at least \$300.00 per month, and that minimum must be approached quickly.

2. Book collections must be drastically revised. As it is axiomatic that no quality public library exists in West Virginia, so it is true that no adequate collection exists in any given public library. It is all too apparent that we merit well and have readily earned the honor of being the butt of that story of the West Virginia library that burned. All was lost, even the three books, one without having been colored. Libraries must find



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means of spending infinitely more on books - up to and surpassing 30 per cent of annual public library budgets. Let's face it; collection building is time-consuming and thankless, and just about every public library will have to start from scratch.

4. Libraries must begin to make legitimate and creative uses of their new technology. Professional literature is full of library uses of the new technology. Unfortunately those uses have zeroed in on our routines, not on functions. But technology has proven feasibility for the furtherance of library services. It too costs money.

The list of whys could go on indefinitely. The need for fiscal parity is very apparent. It will measure the difference between success and failure, between vitality and existence. But to achieve the goal of fiscal parity means more than positive thinking. First of all West Virginia public libraries must forget and forgo forever their chicken and egg syndrome. There is no real proof that a new library building improves circulation more than good service, good collections and innovative publicity. In fact, the opposite should be true. For once and for all, we should forget completely about investing operating revenues for capital improvements. We should have the collective ego and the collective faith that will prove categorically that quality service merits a pretty new building - not the other way around. And we must also accept as axiomatic that limited revenues diluted for that pretty, functional new building results only in limited and diluted services and often a building that is neither pretty nor functional.

But to truly achieve fiscal parity means, most of all, a ready use of our hind legs. We must recognize our importance, and the limitation of that importance and our intellectual and social impact that fiscal paucity only magnifies. We must also be willing to set goals that are high, even if our political acumen tells us those goals are unrealistic. Basically, we must push for that \$5.00 per capita support: fiscal parity on a national basis.

A plan for fiscal parity would necessarily involve a combination of federal, state and local funding. It must be willing to assume and effectively impose sanctions and penalties. WVLA must be willing to serve and fight as an effective lobbying body. Within the next few years public libraries must see:

1. Effective legislation passed that offers basic and adequate fiscal support to public libraries. If such a law imposes a limit on funding, it should be a basement and not a ceiling. Furthermore, responsibility for requesting levies allowed by the law should rest solely with the appropriate library board.

2. State subsidiary funding available under law. Such law is already fact, but the West Virginia Library Commission should be willing to make stringent requirements on local library eligibility for state aid. Requirements for aid, for example, should be raised drastically upwards from 25 cents per capita support. Levels of state aid might also be graduated as local support increases.



for example, should be raised drastically upwards from 25 cents per capita support. Levels of state aid might also be graduated as local support increases.

3. Federal funding will probably continue in the same levels. An effective federal money lever, however, rests in Title II of LSCA. A statewide moratorium on federal funding for public library construction, I believe, must be declared until local libraries reach some decent measure of financing. Our chicken and egg syndrome already approaches reductio ad absurdum.

These sketches of what might be a plan for achieving fiscal parity are only the afterthoughts of one individual. But all of us working in West Virginia libraries have to look squarely at the problem. There continues to be no good public library in West Virginia. More competent staff are needed at all levels. Book expenditures must double, triple, and quadruple. Services must be offered at prime times and to all portions of the public (not only the lacquered ten per cent). New services, especially audio-visual must be offered as parts of realistic and relevant library programming. The new technology requires more than token lip service (or an occasional convention meeting). All these and more are needed for effective public library service in West Virginia.

All cost money. Money is what the state does not have in abundance. But money public libraries need and need now. Unless some modicum of fiscal parity is achieved now, public libraries across the state will become either sequestered enclaves or dilapidated pigeon roosts without function or purpose. Already most of our libraries are just that. Unless fiscal parity is achieved, public libraries will be as germane to the future of West Virginia as the passenger pigeon.

.....

#### MORE ON DC - LC CONVERSION

The time figures referred to by Mrs. Adrian Hughes in "LC to DC: Conversion at Shepherd College Library," West Virginia Libraries, March 1969, p. 9 were misinterpreted in an editorial note. The correct interpretation of the data is: Staff hours per 100 titles for 4 card sets = 2.3 hours.

Mrs. Hughes also submits the following citation which will be of practical value to those interested in conversion:

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee papers, Samore, Theodore, Ed. Problems in library classification Dewey 17 and conversion. Bowker, 1969. (Library & information science studies #1)

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## NEW SOUTH CHARLESTON LIBRARY OPENS AMID CONTROVERSY

By Susan Harper

The South Charleston Library, which will formally open the doors of its new building on May 26, begins its new venture in auspicious physical surroundings but under a cloud of controversy. The low, dark brick, contemporary structure was designed by Charleston area architect Howard Johe and presents a most attractive addition to South Charleston's Fourth Avenue. The interior is spacious, well-lighted and cheery with furnishings of rich walnut, red, and black and a bright red carpet, which covers the public floor area. These colors, combined with the wood and brick, beckon the patron to cool, relaxed study or leisurely book selection.

The floor plan consists of a centrally located charging desk with two main sections branching out on either side -- the adult and reference section and the juvenile section. A convenient feature is the glass-enclosed librarian's office which affords an easy view of all public areas. Spacious stack areas and accessible reference facilities mark the adult section, while low stools, tables and reading benches furnish the juvenile section.

Other features include provisions for the convenience of the library staff and patrons. A small kitchenette, staff lounge and a vinyl-tiled workroom for book processing have been designed for the staff. For patrons and staff alike, an outstanding feature is the meeting room which will seat 50 people and house new audio-visual equipment. Other new equipment for







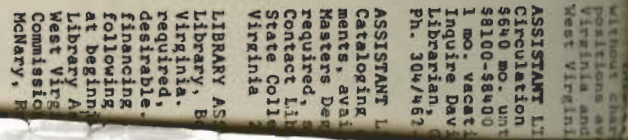
the library includes a mechanical book charger, a microfilm reader-printer, copying equipment for library and patron use and an IBM Selectric typewriter. Parking space has been planned next to the building and this space allows room for future expansion when necessary. The library's collection has also been augmented with an order for books totaling \$3,000 with an emphasis on reference titles, and a new record library with a beginning collection of 100 phonograph records.

Financing of the new \$350,000.00 building was a cooperative venture. Donations by South Charleston area residents and city funds totaled 22.3 per cent, while Appalachian Regional Development funds totaled 14.3 per cent of the cost. The remaining 63.3 per cent was obtained from the federal government through the cooperation of the Kanawha County Public Library board upon representation that the new library would become a branch library.

However advantageous the physical surroundings may appear to library patrons, the internal struggles and governmental controversy clouding the opening of the building portend a difficult future for South Charleston's library. The library was originally planned to operate as a branch of the Kanawha County library system, but the South Charleston Library Board, headed by Robert L. Bryan, has decided for the immediate future to operate the library alone. Mrs. Harold Hayslett, who has been the South Charleston librarian for the past six years, will be retained as head librarian.

The decision to operate independently was made after the two boards -- the Kanawha County Board chaired by A. Guy Stone, and the South Charleston Board -- failed to reach agreement regarding governance of the library as a part of the county





It's truly regrettable that petty squabbles and the typically West Virginian belief in local ownership even to the disadvantage of local people should have marred the opening of the new South Charleston library building. Surely something could have been done to reach a settlement agreeable to all sides. It seems a shame to sacrifice such a beautiful building to the mountaineer spirit.

(It should be noted that repeated attempts to contact Kanawha County board officials proved futile, and thus their views cannot be represented with absolute certainty.)

---

The author of this article is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Library and Information Science and served as a reference librarian for several years at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.

## Personnel

Miss MILDRED I. CONARD, Instructor of Library Science, Shepherd College, will retire June 1, 1969. Miss Conard joined the Shepherd College faculty in September 1967 after many years as the librarian at Martinsburg Senior High School, Martinsburg, W. Va.

Miss JOANNE KUNTSMAN, Librarian, Old Charles Town Library, will be associated with the Catalog Department of Shippensburg State College, Shippensburg, Pennsylvania, in June.

Miss JEANNETTE T. WRIGHT, Assistant Librarian, Shepherd College, will be associated with the Catalog Department of Mary Baldwin College Library, Staunton, Virginia next year after her June marriage to Billy M. Ewing.

Miss MARY ELIZABETH WYSONG, Librarian at Charles Town Junior High School, will be working for her master's degree in library science at Florida State University this fall.

## NECROLOGY

A former member of the West Virginia Library Commission (1941 - 1956) Mrs. HELEN V. WILSON, 84, died in Huntington March 12. She received the American Library Association's Trustees Award in 1956 for outstanding service in promoting library service in West Virginia.



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## HISTORY OF RALEIGH COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

By Mary Louise Graham  
Raleigh County Librarian

How did the library begin? Was it first just a dream in the mind of one person, or did several people, all wanting the same thing, work to make it a reality?

A few libraries, in modern times at least, using matching government funds, seem to be born practically full-grown with splendid new buildings and assured continued support. But this has not been the case in the majority of the libraries of our country. Many of them have grown from very small beginnings, struggling through the years to develop a real service to their communities.

In the case of the Raleigh County Public Library, the movement was slow and fumbling -- at times the question of ever having a free public library seemed to be dead -- or at least dormant.

According to an old letter in the files of the library, a Raleigh County Library Association was formed in 1924 "for the specific purpose of securing a free public library all over Raleigh County with headquarters in Beckley and branches in every district in the county. If there are places where a branch cannot be established, then we shall put a 'book-wagon' on the road and carry your library to your door."

This appeared on a form letter sent to area citizens, urging them to join the association, paying one dollar for each membership, under a letterhead listing James F. Houchins, president; William C. Griffith, secretary, and J. Meadows, treasurer.

On the left-hand side of each sheet was outlined the "Purpose of the Association: to establish a Free Public Library in Beckley. Purpose of the Library: to make available to the people, the best information on any vital matter, free; and for the promotion of the instruction in the following subjects: agriculture, horticulture, bee culture, dairy farming, poultry raising, forestry, mining, transportation (good roads), distribution (merchandising), banking and currency (financing), cooperation (public welfare), health and sanitation (prevention of disease), or any other matter of general public interest."

The interested group, led by Houchins, met for the first time in the home of Mr. and Mrs. T. R. Ragland.



In March of 1924, according to letterheads, the board members were: J. F. Houchins, president; Miss Eva M. Keyser, vice-president; George M. Colegank; Rev. Howard P. Pullin, secretary; Miss Marion Johnston, assistant secretary; and J. C. Heaberlin, Sr., treasurer.

Houchins, called "Uncle Jimmy" by many, wrote several letters advertising a July 4, 1924, celebration, which he stated would be the birth of the library. At this affair, \$100 was made selling refreshments on the courthouse lawn, and many books were donated for the library. The Young Men's Club donated another \$100 to the cause and membership increased to 100. William McTaggart lent the largest number of books -- 100 -- from his own collection.

In March of 1925, according to a letter, Grover Hedrick gave the sum of \$9.75 to purchase a "priceless treasure" valued at \$100 and entitled "The History of the Birth and Creation of Writing."

Houchins wrote letters to many established libraries in other states seeking help and advice. His was "a voice crying in the wilderness" and for many years he had very little encouragement in his efforts to give the people a free public library.

The population of Beckley at this time was given as 4,000 and the county population as 42,000.

Some support came from McTaggart, Hedrick, G. A. Mohler, and Charles Hodel. However, the years from 1925 through 1935, which included the depression period, saw very little accomplished.

Not until 1936 did the library begin to show signs of life again. The Work Progress Administration, known as the WPA, came to this area and under the direction of Mrs. T. A. Gatherum and Mrs. Harold Odee, supervisors, a few books were put on shelves in the vacant Central School Annex as a nucleus for a lending library. The Post-Herald editor, Ted McDowell, took up the cause urging donations of books.

Later that year, H. U. Sloan, president of the Beckley Chamber of Commerce, succeeded in having that group sponsor the beginning library. The Woman's Club of Beckley and the Junior Department headed a drive for book donations and the Boy Scouts collected the books.

The first "Traveling Library" in this area was begun at this time. Books were distributed by Mrs. J. R. Hubbard, another WPA worker, as she drove to communities to teach arts and crafts. The schedule was Cliff Top School (Fayette County) on Monday, Helen School on Wednesday and Grandview on Thursday.

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Then another setback struck the library. The Raleigh County Board of Education needed the Central School Annex for school classes and the library faced extinction. The Chamber of Commerce received permission from the Memorial Building board for the library to occupy quarters in the new building then under construction. Temporary quarters were established on Main Street on the second floor of the Baby Shop building.

One by-product of the WPA work was the school for book repairing and binding under the direction of Mrs. T. C. Moorefield. These women did a very professional job of repairing over 4,000 books. One of the women, Mrs. Maude Hedrick of Mabscott, became so proficient that she remained on the library payroll for 30 years until 1968.

According to correspondence in the files, Houchins had been asked to write a history or story of the library movement. He asked for information as to whom the original sponsor or promoter may have been, but none was forthcoming. As for the history he had been urged to write, if one was ever finished, it has been lost through the years.

The year 1938 was the turning point in the affairs of the library. The first free library re-opened to the public in new quarters in the Memorial Building on February 2, 1938, with Mrs. T. R. Gatherum, WPA supervisor, as the director.

Everybody was enthusiastic. The Woman's Club and Junior Department brought in 3,000 books. The Lions, Kiwanis, and Rotary clubs, Salvation Army, American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, and the Dry Cleaners Union each pledged \$5 a month for a year to pay the expenses of the library. The Chamber of Commerce agreed to lend the Library Board \$150 to buy materials for new shelves with paint and labor donated. Beckley ministers made requests from their pulpits on Sunday for donation of books.

In August, 1938, Houchins appeared before the Beckley City Council with a plea for the return of money which he said belonged to the library. Floyd Sayre, a library board member, told the council that the special levy of 1927 for the library had produced \$1,498 which had been put in the city's general fund because no library was established at that time. This is the money to which Houchins referred.

The board members for many years during the 1940's were Dr. J. L. Lineweaver, chairman; H. U. Sloan, treasurer; E. M. Ashworth; Ben Ashworth; Floyd Sayre; and Creve Maples.

Just when things were looking up, another problem faced the library. There was a rumor that the WPA was pulling out,

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leaving the status of the library and its books uncertain. J. Raiford Watkins, Raleigh Register editor, wrote a letter to WPA headquarters, explaining the situation and eventually the library was saved.

Mrs. Mary Alice Reese succeeded Mrs. Gatherum as librarian and the library continued to grow in service to the public, but was always hampered by lack of funds. After the death of Mrs. Reese in June, 1950, Mrs. Cecil H. Graham was appointed librarian and has continued to act in that capacity to the present time.

During the next year, 1951, the Junior Department of the Woman's Club undertook the project of opening a children's department in the basement. Permission to use the room was given, and new draperis for both departments were purchased. Shelves were constructed from lumber furnished at cost, paint was donated, and the painting was done by Beckley firemen in their leisure time.

Later in the year, an electric book-charging machine was installed, making the charging of books both speedier and more accurate. This proved very popular with the public and circulation of books doubled in the next few years.

Mrs. Elizabeth French Bivens was appointed assistant librarian and remained in this position until her death several years later.

The need for library service to distant parts of the county was recognized by the library board but no funds were available for this purpose. At this time the library was receiving support from the City of Beckley, the Raleigh County Court, the Raleigh County Board of Education, and United Fund. The librarian was buying 100 new books a month in an effort to build up the collection. It now had 10,000 volumes and an annual circulation of 31,000.

The library lost a valued friend in the death December 31, 1955, of a board member, Herbert U. Sloan. Memorial gifts given in his name to the library amounted to over \$700.

A levy in 1956, which would have aided the library by enabling it to expand, failed to pass.

In 1959, an addition to the library was completed. Contributions totaling \$30,000 were made with equal donations from the City of Beckley, the Raleigh County Court, and the Raleigh County Board of Education.

The new wing, built on the Howe Street side of the Memorial Building, on land deeded to the library by the Raleigh County Court, more than doubled the original space. A split-level design was used to allow supervision of three floors from the main desk, thus saving the cost of additional personnel. A



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stairway now connected the main library with the children's department directly beneath.

Construction costs required all the money available; there were no funds for furnishings. The Woman's Club of Beckley sponsored a drive to raise the necessary money and began by giving \$1,000 from the club's general fund. A total of \$6,500 was collected with several groups making large gifts such as \$500 from the Azalea Garden Club, \$500 from the Elk's Club, \$500 from the Civitan Club in memory of J. E. Sharp, and others. In addition, a gift of \$1,000 given by Mrs. H. U. Sloan as a memorial for the late H. U. Sloan, was used for the construction of a large sectional charging desk. The Junior Department of the Woman's Club supplied draw-drapery for one floor at cost of \$200. When completed, the result was a modern, attractively furnished library.

With the passage of the Library Services Act in 1958, which allotted money to each state on a matching basis for the next five years, the possibility of getting bookmobile service came closer to reality. Raleigh and Fayette counties worked together, forming a committee which met with the West Virginia Library Commission several times. In 1959, the commission shipped 20,000 new books, valued at \$80,00 to \$100,000 to the newly formed library of Fayette County located in Fayetteville. Mrs. Graham, Raleigh County librarian, was asked to divide the books between the two counties, acting as regional librarian. Each county received on loan a bookmobile, and Raleigh County's share of the books was brought over in this unit. The addition of the 10,000 new books for Raleigh County raised the total holdings to 25,000 volumes.

Another giant step forward was taken in 1960 with the organization of a "Friends of the Library" group. Again sponsored by the Woman's Club of Beckley, the first president of the new group was Mrs. Robert L. Amick. Since that organizational meeting, as many as 700 members have joined, paying dues of one dollar annually. Programs both educational and cultural have been presented each year and several gifts of equipment have been given to the library. Some of these gifts are glass entrance door, outdoor sign, and catalog filing cabinet.

Annual used-books sales have been held for the past three years with the amounts received increasing each year -- \$125, then \$418, and last year \$584.

Bookmobile service began in January of 1960 with Mrs. Felix Fisher as librarian and Fred L. Pennington as driver. Making a circuit of the county every two weeks, the unit makes almost 60 stops. Mrs. Mildred Totten became bookmobile librarian following Mrs. Fisher's departure for France. Two years later, in January of 1965, Mrs. Buford Pugh succeeded Mrs. Totten and is serving in that capacity at this time. Paul Williams is the driver of the mobile. Circulation figures for the bookmobile have increased enormously with the latest figures

reaching 72,000 for 1968.

In 1963, memorial gifts given in the name of Mrs. Katherine Hodel, wife of Charles Hodel, amounted to \$658. The money was used for the purchase of books on art and for a range of shelves to house them.

The year 1964 brought another crisis to the library when the Raleigh County Court, because of an overdraft, was forced to cut back funds from its support. A committee of interested citizens -- Mrs. Richard G. Starr, James K. Edmundson, and Rodney Webb -- headed a drive to raise enough money to keep the library and bookmobile in operation. Many friends contributed to the fund for a total of \$6,500 collected.

The following year, the United Fund accepted the library as one of its agencies to receive help until the Raleigh County Court could assume support again.

Mrs. Graham was elected president of the West Virginia Library Association and served for two terms, 1964 and 1965.

The unexpected death of Mrs. Elizabeth French Bivens in September of 1966 left a vacancy on the staff. Mrs. Albert D. Kistin was named as her replacement and served as assistant librarian until she moved out of state early in 1968. Mrs. George M. Haldane was appointed to the position in April, 1968, and is serving in that capacity at the present time.

A windfall in 1967 was received by the library with the presentation of \$1,000 by Leslie C. Gates of Gates' Engineering Co., who stated that he hoped it would form the nucleus for a building or capital improvements program.

The first evening hours at the library were sponsored by the Raleigh County Classroom Teachers Association, which paid the librarian's salary for one night each week. Later Beckley College assumed responsibility to pay for three additional nights each week. In the past two years (1967 and 1968), Beckley College paid \$5,000 annually to the library while the college library was under construction. When the new college library was opened in September of 1968, this assistance to the public library was discontinued. The library continues, however, to keep evening hours on four nights each week.

National Library Week first was observed in March of 1958 for one week. Since that time, it has been celebrated at approximately the same time each year. Through the concerted efforts of many individuals and organizations, Raleigh County received state-wide recognition on several occasions for its excellent observance of the special week. "Open House," exhibits in stores, and contests of various kinds have been sponsored by such groups as the Beckley Jaycees, the Friends of the Library and the women's clubs of the county.



September of 1967 saw the acquisition of two more charging machines. One was installed on the bookmobile to handle the increased circulation and the other placed in the children's department downstairs.

A copying machine also was obtained on a rental basis in 1968 in the hope that the mutilation of books by students might be avoided or at least curtailed. Pages from books or magazines can be photographed for a small charge.

A collection of recordings was received by the library from the West Virginia Library Commission. In 1968 this was brought up to date by the addition of several hundred new records. These are lent just as books are.

The library board began participation in a retirement program for employees by joining the West Virginia Public Employment Retirement System in July, 1968.

Today the library has a book collection of more than 31,000 volumes with an annual circulation of over 125,000. Goals for the improvement of library service in the future include:

- A building plan for a new library or extensive remodeling of the present structure.

- A special library law which will assure tax support, such as the bills passed in Kanawha, Cabell and Ohio counties.

- A new bookmobile, which is badly needed.

Any success of growth achieved by the Raleigh County Public Library must be credited to the many people of the community who have given their time as volunteer workers in carrying out the programs and projects. Special thanks are owed to W. O. Sydnor, Jr., for many hours of volunteer work in filing catalog cards. The press, the radio, and television have cooperated extensively, with particularly fine publicity being provided by the Beckley newspapers.

[ The above article was prepared by Mrs. Mary Louise Graham for the Raleigh County Historical Society and is reprinted from the Beckley Post-Herald. ]

#### WVLA COMMITTEES (cont.)

Membership Committee: Robert Willits (Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Charleston, W. Va.), Chairman; Janet Callahan (University H.S., Morgantown, W. Va.); J.A. Creasey (W. Va. Law Library, Charleston, W. Va.); Jean Elliott (Shepherd College Library, Shepherdstown, W. Va.); Donald Springer (St. Albans, W. Va.)

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Resolutions Committee: Helen Stockert (West Virginia Wesleyan College, Buckhannon, WV); Chairman; Robert Willits (Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Chas., WV); Nancy Van Auken (Charleston, WV).

Special Awards Committee: Nicholas Winowich (Kanawha Co. Pub. Lib., Charleston, W. V.), Chairman; John Scott, (W. Va. State College, Institute, W.V.)

Publications Committee: Lorise B. Topliffe (W.Va. Univ. Library, Morgantown, WV)

Intellectual Freedom Committee: Ron Strong (West Liberty State College Library, W. Liberty, WV), Chairman; Janet Callahan (Univ. H.S., Morgantown, WV); Jean Elliott (Shepherd College Library, Shepherdstown, WV); Donald Springer (St. Albans, WV); J.A. Creasey (W. Va. Law Library, Charleston, WV)

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